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TESTIMONY OF
SARAH M. RICHARDS, PRESIDENT
HAWAII THEATRE CENTER

TO: CITY COUNCIL, CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

The Honorable Todd K. Apo, Chair
The Honorable Nestor R. Garcia
The Honorable Duke Bainum
The Honorable Romy M. Cachola
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz
The Honorable Charles K. Djou
The Honorable Gary H. Okino
The Honorable Rod Tam

RE: CITY COUNCIL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2009
2:00 PM, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
BILL 15, CD1

To the Honorable Todd Apo and Member of the City Council:

My name is Sarah Richards and I'm president of the Hawaii Theatre Center and I'm pleased to have the opportunity to testify in support of the Mayor's original budget for the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts in Bill 15, of \$740,000.

Specifically I'm here to urge you to restore the proposed cuts to the budget of the MOCA office, as those cuts will have direct bearing on the Hawaii Theatre, and our ability to continue operating and delivering programs for over 100,000 Oahu residents and visitors annually, 5,000 public school students and 50 local non-profit performing arts and civic organizations.

The Hawaii Theatre has been in a long partnership with the City and County of Honolulu addressing not only the preservation of a cultural landmark in downtown Honolulu, providing the second-largest performance venue in the State, offering a wide array of

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attractions, but very specifically serving as the catalyst for the economic and cultural revitalization of Downtown/Chinatown.

Use of the City funds are vital components in helping us to keep the doors open, providing employment for local artists and provides a facility widely used by many organizations to present Hawaiian shows, ballet, children's programs, Broadway entertainment, classical music and plays.

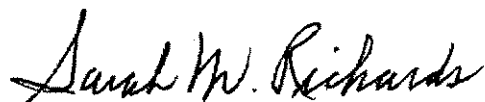
Can you imagine the impact on local restaurants, galleries and shops in downtown Honolulu - that is now coping with serious crime and drug problems - if the 100,000 patrons that the Theatre brings to its door annually with bright lights and HPD security were to disappear?

As we all know, the fiscal crisis has hit all businesses and most particularly impacts non-profits that depend, as in our case, on 65% of our support from the public and private sectors to survive. The \$75,000 which the City and County has awarded to the Theatre has a multiplier effect of allowing us to operate, present shows and attractions, and contributes to the general economy.

The Theatre is very fiscally conservative and has operated in a prudent manner since reopening in 1996. Recently, we were recognized by the Non-Profit Finance Fund, an organization which analyzes non-profit financial operations and noted that the Theatre was a model for others.

Therefore, I urge you to restore the proposed cuts in the MOCA budget to allow our lights to shine brightly as we greatly enhance the economic and cultural life our our great city.

Thank you very much for your consideration.



Sarah M. Richards
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